Priscilla Papers

"Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos more perfectly in the way of the Lord."

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The Role of Women in the Church, in Society and in the Home

By W. Ward Gasque

In his book, *Evangelicals at an Impasse: Biblical Authority in Practice* (John Knox Press, 1979), Robert K. Johnston, dean of North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, puts his finger on an embarrassing situation. While Evangelicals are all committed to a high view of Scripture, to the absolute authority of Scripture, they disagree on almost everything else.

This is an overstatement, of course. You can take the affirmations of the Apostles' Creed, and there may be one or two statements at most which any orthodox Christians would quarrel with. There is at the heart of the gospel a core of Christian commitment that all Christians who are committed to Scripture affirm. On the other hand, we as Evangelicals come to a tremendous variety of conclusions on almost every sort of thing when we approach Scripture. The subject at hand is but one illustration of this disunity.

To begin with, it is important to affirm that people on both sides of the debate are committed to the authority of Scripture. It is unfair to say that one side or the other accepts Scripture and the other does not. This accusation has been made many times in this debate as in others, but it really doesn't help to do so. If you take this position, you end up not having any discussion at all.

Today we seldom debate questions concerning forms of church government. People used to take these matters very, very seriously indeed—whether you should have bishops, or whether you should have elders, or whether you should have deacons, or whether you should be more organized according to congregational pattern. Which is the scriptural form of church organization? It probably does not make a lot of difference to most Evangelical Christians today. And yet, blood has been spilt, literally and figuratively, over an issue like that, on the basis of how people have approached Scripture.

The two divergent approaches to the question of the role of women which are common among contemporary Evangelical Christians we might call the Traditional View (the majority opinion) and the Egalitarian View (the minority opinion).

The Traditional View stresses submission and dependence. A woman's role in relation to home, church and society is to be in submission to her husband (or to male leadership) and dependent upon him/them. She has her own sphere and freedom to exercise her spiritual gifts; but it is ultimately under the leadership of the male, who takes the lead in the home and in the church, that her gifts are expressed. This view is based on a hierarchical understanding of the relationship of God to Christ to man to woman, stemming from Paul's argument in I Corinthians 11, where he presents what we might call a chain of hierarchy: Christ is subject to the Father, man to Christ, and woman to man. This is the accent of the Traditional View.

The Egalitarian View argues that there is no scriptural reason for women not to share in leadership in the church, or to participate in a marriage relationship that is based on a principle of mutual submission and interdependent love. The accent in the Egalitarian View is on mutual submission—not the submission of one party to the other, but each party to one another—both in the church and in the home.

Each side has its texts from the New Testament. The Traditional View usually focuses on five or six texts, starting with I Corinthians 11:2-6, which teaches that the head of the woman is the man; and I Corinthians 14:33-35, which says that women are to keep silence in the church; and moving on to I Timothy 2:11-15, where keeping silence in the church is defined as not teaching or holding a teaching office; and to Ephesians 5:22-33, where Paul argues for a hierarchical relationship in the family (the responsibility of wives is to submit to their husbands; husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church). There are perhaps one or two other texts, like 1 Peter 3:1-7, where again wives are exhorted to be submissive to their husbands, and husbands to be considerate to their wives as they honor them as the weaker sex.

The Egalitarian View also takes these texts seriously, but it does not begin with these. It points out that if you leave these texts to the side until the end of the discussion, you will come out with a different conclusion. If you look at these texts first, you have basically programmed yourself to come to the Traditional View; but if you put these texts aside for the time being and first study all else that the Bible has to teach theologically about the role of men and women—in society and in the created order, in the Old Testament people of God and the New Testament people of God, in the church and the home—then you come to a different position.

The Egalitarian View would likely start with a study of Genesis 1, 2 and 3. If you look at Genesis 1: 26-28, you will see that God made **man as male and female** (not simply male) **in his image**. It isn't simply man who is in the

image of God—man as male—but man as male and female. Both man and woman have a direct relationship with God, and each shares jointly the responsibility of bearing children and having dominion over the created order.

There has been much debate about what the phrase, "in the image of God," means. I think it means to be the representative of God in creation, as the image of, say, a king, or even a deity, is the representation of the presence and authority of the king or deity (see David J. A. Clines, *Tyndale Bulletin* , 19, 1968, pp. 53-103.) In creation, we are to represent God, be his image in the world, and therefore have certain responsibility over the created order. In any event, whatever the image of God means theologically, it is jointly shared by male and female.

In Genesis 2:18-24 the same point is underlined. Both male and female are from God, and both as one flesh are heirs of the grace of God. It is only the result of the Fall (Genesis 3:16ff) that the woman becomes subordinate to man. There is not even a hint in the narrative of Genesis that woman is in any way subordinate to man prior to the Fall.

Note, however, that in Genesis 3:16 the subordination of woman is **not prescribed, but predicted.** It, along with other situations, like having to clear your garden of thorns and weeds, and having to work harder because of the effect that sin has had upon the created order, is a result of the Fall, rather than prescribed as a part of the created order. Furthermore, subordination in Gensis 3:17ff is primarily related to the husband/wife relationship. There is no hint here that all women should be, or would be, under the authority of men.

The egalitarian apologist argues further that in Christ there is a new creation; the results of the Fall are reversed. Paul makes this very clear in Galatians 3:28, where he says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Whatever inferior positions people might have in society, these have been abolished in Christ. Under Roman law, there was a radical distinction between slave and free; in the synagogue there was a radical distinction between Jew and Gentile; and in general society, synagogue, Roman law and everywhere else there was a radical distinction between male and female. Greeks in the synagogue were subordinate to Jews; slaves, to free men; and males had the domination over females here as almost everywhere in the first century.

But in Christ, Paul says, these things have been done away with! So whatever the norms for general society, in the new creation, the church, there is the beginning of the new created order: man and woman are one. They are equal.

This new creation, the defender of the Egalitarian View would go on to point out, was demonstrated in Jesus' life. Whatever difficulty some egalitarians have with Paul, they certainly don't have any with Jesus! There is not one hint anywhere in the teaching of Jesus that he ever suggested the idea that women are to be dependent on men, or to be in submission to men, or in any way were to be regarded as inferior in terms of their relationship within the discipleship community or in the world outside. Quite to the contrary, there are a host of illustrations that set Jesus over against his Jewish context, as well as the pagan world outside of Palestine.

He had women disciples; rabbis did not have women disciples. He talked with women in public; rabbis did not approve of speaking to women in public. He touched women; rabbis would condemn that. He had friendships with many women like Mary and Martha; women travelled with him; some wealthy women supported him and his disciples in their ministry and were identified with him. Women were standing by the cross, and women were also the first witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus.

Women were regarded by Jesus as equal to men even in the question of divorce. Among the striking features of Jesus' teaching on divorce is that he takes the woman and the man as being on the same footing (Mark 10:11-12). This is quite contrary to Jewish law. And again, there is not a negative thing said about women, nor is there any hint of a hierarchical relationship between men and women in marriage.

But this is true not merely of Jesus. As you look at the early church, there are many examples where women were, in fact, engaged in significant ministries in the church, even in the roles of leadership. For example, it isvery clear from 1 Corinthians 11 and from Acts 21:9 thsat women prayed and prophesied in the early church. Without entering into a long discussion on the meaning of "prophecy," we may assume that it at least includes what we know as "preaching" today. It may be more than that; but it is at least that. It is very clear, then, that women in the early church did lead in public prayer and did prophesy; otherwise Paul would not be concerned about their wearing veils, which was a symbol of their authority to do this (1 Cor 11:10).

Again, you find women sharing in the deaconate in the early church. Paul in Romans 16:1-2 mentions his good friend Phoebe, who is called "a deacon." Translations tend to call her a "deaconess" or simply a "servant" of the church: the word used is the same word that is translated elsewhere "deacon"; and it is the same word that is normally translated in the New Testament as "minister." It is linked with the foundation idea of what it means to be a minister of Jesus Christ (cf., Mark 10:45). Paul also speaks of Pheobe's being a "helper" in the church (Greek *prostatis* , better translated "guardian" or "protector"), and that again is a word implying a position of leadership in the early church. (Other texts that speak of women sharing the deaconate are 1 Timothy 3:11, 1 Timothy 5:3-16 and Titus 2:3.)

Third, a study of the New Testament data concerning life in the early church finds women engaging in evangelism and teaching. Look at all the women mentioned

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Books

A CORD OF THREE STRANDS *By Linda Raney Wright, Fleming H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1987. Reviewed by Alvera Mickelsen.*

This book, written by a woman on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ, makes a distinct contribution to the current literature on biblical teachings about men and women in the marriage relationship and as co-workers in the service of Christ. The title is taken from Ecclesiastes 4:12: "A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart." The three strands, in Wright's book, refers to man, woman and God.

The book is divided into two sections: the first discusses the marriage relationship; the second concerns how men and women can and should work together in Christian service.

Wright's approach to the marriage relationship is well summarized in her statement on p. 81. "The real foundation of a Christian marriage is the relationship with God of both individuals. Both partners must be sold out to Jesus Christ and individually led by Him. This will enable both parties to submit to each other as well as encourage, serve, please, build and love each other."

This thesis is spelled out in the rest of the first section, amply illustrated by the experiences of Linda in her own marriage to Rusty Wright, and by scores of other husbands and wives with whom Linda has talked.

This abundance of illustrations is one of the strong points of the book. The author recounts stories of many marriage partners who thought the "chain of command" (with the husband above the wife) was the biblical imperative, even though it may not have been bringing satisfaction or joy to the couple. She tells of marriages that failed because that concept was not suited to the individual couple and neither pastors nor church leaders helped them to find what Wright believes to be the biblical teaching of true partnership and oneness in Christ.

Wright deals carefully with the passages regularly quoted by those who insist that God ordained the husband to be the dominant one in the family and that the wife is to be subordinate. She points out that nowhere does God tell Adam or any other man that he is supposed to have authority over his wife, or to have the last word. She points out that such attitudes on the part of husbands indicate that they are treating their wives as perpetual children, rather than as their adult counterparts who were made in the image of God and responsible to God for the use of their abilities and gifts. In story after story, Wright shows how marriages *improved* when the more biblical model of partnership, mutual love and submission was slowly (and sometimes painfully) built into the marriage.

The second half of the book deals with men and women in Christian service. The author states, "There is more to life than a fulfilling marriage. *When the higher charges of becoming what God has designed us to be become our preoccupation, a good marriage falls into line..*" Wright strongly emphasizes the primary demand of each man and woman to please and glorify God. She points out the paradoxes that exist in many Christian organizations—a woman may preach and teach men on the mission field, but not in her home church that supports her.

The book then recounts the many biblical illustrations of women whom God used in public ministry—Huldah, Deborah and others. She recounts Jesus' non-sexist approach to women, and the ministry of women in the early church. Sha also tackles the "problem" passages, such as I Timothy 2:9-15, drawing on the work of biblical scholars. In this section, as in Part I on marriage, Wright peppers her discussion with illustrations of women who were hindered from full service for Christ by church leaders or incorrect early teaching. Other stories tell of contemporary women who are being remarkably used by God to win others for Christ when they are free to use the gifts given by the Holy Spirit.

The style of *A Cord of Three Strands* is conversational and easy to read. Other books may deal in greater depth with theological and biblical interpretations, but this one puts flesh and blood and living applications into each discussion.

This book is a good one to give to pastors who are counselling marriage partners in the "submissive wife" approach. Some pastors who find it difficult to look theologically at a viewpoint different from their own may be challenged to consider case study evidence that another biblical approach may promote better marriages and happier families. They may even consider how many more workers for Christ might be available if encouragement were given to women whom God has gifted.

WE RECOMMEND HIGHLY

EQUAL TO SERVE *by Gretchen Gaebelein Hull. Fleming H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1987.*

"We are to concentrate on the inner characteristics of a person, not on his or her gender." So states author Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, a biblical feminist whose new book, *Equal To Serve*, comes to grips with the controversial social issues of today. What are the roles of women and men in marriage, parenthood, the workplace? They are to be assumed with complete freedom and shared responsibility, answers Hull.

Equal To Serve takes a close look at the women of the Bible and the men they lived and served with. The author takes issue with the many traditions that Christians seem to be comfortable with today. She garners strong scriptural evidence that with truly Christ-like attitudes, male and female can serve God completely and sacrificially, each using their God-given talents in whatever role he or she feels led to follow.

The author points out that biblical feminists such as

herself believe that Scripture affirms the worth and value of male and female equally. Hull favors partnership, not competition; mutual submission, not domination; and a priesthood of all believers, not a male hierarchy.

The author states, "To those who keep trying to tell me that there exists a peculiarly female role that all women must play, I simply point to God's Word as my authority in the matter. Miriam, Deborah, Abigail, Huldah, Priscilla, Phoebe—the list could go on. These women, approved by God, were indeed the exceptions who prove that all believers should have equal opportunity to serve Him as He calls. . . God is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Can His church be less?"

Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, daughter of the noted theologian Frank Gaebelein, is married to an attorney and the mother of three children. A Sunday School teacher and elder in her local church, she has been actively involved with the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy.

Equal To Serve is a finalist for the 1988 Gold Medallion Book Award, Theology and Doctrine Category, sponsored by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. The other finalists in this category are authored by R.C. Sproul, Tony Campolo, John Stott, and Billy Graham.

CALL ME BLESSED: The Emerging Christian Woman *by Faith Martin. Wm. B.Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1988.*

In *Call Me Blessed* Faith Martin provides an enlightening overview of women's role in Old Testament and New Testament times as she examines scriptural passages about women. She maintains that the traditional translation and traditional interpretation of these passages have been products of a male-dominated culture. Using recent scholarship as a corrective, she offers, "not a challenge to Scripture, but a challenge to traditional interpretations of Scripture regarding women."

Through this book readers participate in an informed laywoman's struggle to understand women's place in God's church. *Call Me Blessed* seeks, with proper reference to Scripture, the reconciliation of men and women as children of God.

Faith Martin is an active laywoman in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. She is married and the mother of three sons. Her book will be reviewed in an upcoming issue of *Priscilla Papers* .

Who Are the Women in I Timothy 2: 1-15 (Part II)

By Berkeley Mickelsen

In the first installment of this series, we noted and illustrated the importance of the presence or absence of the article (the) in Greek grammar. Presence of the article usually indicates *identity* and absence of the article generally stresses *quality* or *character*. . We showed how this grammatical difference (not usually present in English) affects our interpretation of verses 1 through 7 in I Timothy 2.

We now turn our attention to the presence or absence of the Greek article in the crucial passages that have been used for centuries to limit the participation of women in teaching and leadership in the church.

Literal Translation: I Timothy 2:8-15. 8.I desire that *the* men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument. 9. Likewise, I desire that in respectable [or modest] clothing women adorn themselves with modesty and chastity, not with braiding of hair or with gold or with pearls or with expensive clothing, 10. but with anything which is fitting for women [plural] professing godliness through good works. 11. Let woman [singular] be learning in quietness with all subjection [to God]. 12. Further, I am not permitting for woman [singular] teaching and ['n] domineering over man, but I am ordering her to be learning in quietness. 13. Now, you see then, Adam was formed earlier, then Eve. 14. And Adam was not deceived but *the* woman [Eve] being deceived [or led astray] has come to be in transgression. But she [Eve] will be saved [or attain salvation] through *the* childbearing it they remain [abide] in faith [faithfulness] and in love and in holiness with chastity [involving good judgement].

Verse 8.Here Paul discusses how men as a class should pray in every place. He uses the article with "men," thus identifying them as one group of human beings (generic use of the article.) No article appears with the phrase "in every place" or elsewhere in the verse. Regardless of the characteristics of any place, men as a group (*the* men) are to be praying positively—lifting up holy hands to do all that God wants them to do. They are to pray without anger or argument (no articles.) Such a qualitative mood and action (anger and argument) would never promote genuine prayer. Paul had first hand experience with the men Timothy was to insrtuct. In this verse Paul instructs men as a class or group by an indirect command. A *direct* command would read: "Men, pray in every place in this way." But here we have an *indirect* command: "I desire that *the* men pray in every place in this way." This indirect command is mostly positive, only negative in the warning about "anger and argument."

Verse 9. Now the discussion turns to women of various kinds. Note that Paul does *not* begin the verse: "I desire that *the* women (as a class or group). . ." Paul is speaking to women with a variety of qualities and characteristics and in the negative commands to a certain kind of woman with character traits that must be changed. *The absence of the article with "women" shows that qualitative kinds of women are defined by the context. It is only to a certain kind of woman that the negative commands apply.*

In verses 9-10 we have what is technically called an "indirect command." The negative and positive sides of these commands tells us the *kinds* of women Paul is addressing or is concerned about. Of course, all women could hear these commands, but the absence of the article shows that Paul addressed the negative commands to one kind (quality) of Gentile woman rather than all women. He instructs those who had problems with modesty, chastity, or the exhibition of wealth. Paul states this carefully: "I desire that in respectable clothing women (all kinds) adorn themselves with modesty and chastity." Then he shifts to the negative side: "*not* with braiding of hair or with gold or with pearls or with expensive clothing." Here is one kind of woman who needs help. Women who were not guilty of immodesty, unchastity or exhibition of wealth did not need these rebukes that were part of Paul's instructions. But there were some women whom Timothy really needed to reach and restore.

Verse 10. There is no article in this verse, indicating Paul is still writing about the same kind of woman—those who did not know what was fitting. Instead of the adornment that was part of their past (perhaps their present too), the women addressed in verse 9b were to adorn themselves "with anything that is fitting for women professing godliness through good works . . .." This (and other things) they had to learn.

Apparently, some women professing godliness were not conducting themselves rightly. Men or women may profess godliness but not live godly lives. Paul had explained in I Timothy 1: 9 that law is not given for a righteous person but for unrighteous persons. There are two sides of law; law both instructs and rebukes. In I Timothy 1: 9 Paul emphasizes the side of law that rebukes. This side of law is for unrighteous persons and exists to make such persons aware that their conduct is sinful. So, in chapter 2 where Paul gives commands, the negative side of the indirect commands was to show a certain kind of woman that her conduct was part of an ungodly lifestyle that must be abandoned. She must be learning what a godly life involves. Other kinds of Christian women knew this and lived consistent godly lives.

Verse 11. No article appears in this verse but there is one third person singular imperative. Paul shifts from the plural "women" to the singular "woman." Perhaps he is indicating to Timothy that where a group of people were doing wrong things, Timothy should deal indivdually with them. Woman (singular) of the kind having a problem with modesty, chastity and exhibition of wealth must be "learning in quietness with all subjection [to God]." Such a woman's former life had been self-centered (see verse 9). Learning about a Christian manner of life was essential for her restoration. Paul wrote here about one kind of woman. Those who apply verses 11-12 to *all* women have forgotten what Paul said in I Timothy 1: 9: law on its negative side is for those who are disobedient. Paul here sets forth how disobedient women can be restored.

Verse 12. Paul places further restrictions on this kind of woman. The combination of immodesty, unchastity and exhibition of wealth points to a woman from the upper classes. She could very well be educated and able to teach. But she must not do so. Paul forbids teaching 'n domineering. The word for domineering has many possible meanings, but both words together (teaching and domineering) seem to refer to one and the same activity[1] toward a man on the part of such a kind of woman. Notice that I have shortened the "and" that comes between the two words. Philip Payne in his article "*Oude* in I Timothy 2: 12" covers all the examples of this negative conjunction in the New Testament. He concludes that the second word joined by *oude* to the first word clarifies the meaning of the first word. Here Paul would forbid "to teach in such a manner that domineers over a man."[2] Hence the translation "teaching 'n domineering" conveys clearly both things going on at the same time. Such teaching and domineering show a wrong attitude on the part of an authoritarian teacher. Consequently, Paul restates what he said in verse 11: He commands a process of restoration—"that she be learning in quietness."

Verses 13-15. These verses must be dealt with as a unit. They explain why learning is so important for a certain kind of woman. She must overpower a long p—iod of deception.

Verses 13-14. Paul points to Eve as an example of a *sinless* woman who was deceived by moral evil. "Now Adam was formed earlier [adjective in Greek], then Eve." By these words Paul may simply be locating the place in the Old Testament (Genesis 2-3) from which he is taking his illustration, or he may have been refuting some first century gnostic heresy about whether Adam or Eve came first. "And Adam was not deceived but the woman (article shows specific reference to Eve—*article of previous mention*) being deceived [or led astray] has come to be in transgression." Adam sinned knowingly, but Eve was genuinely deceived. If Eve needed more learning, how much more did the kind of woman to whom Paul was referring.

Verse 15a. Eve is still the subject of the first verb in verse 15. Paul discusses the deception and salvation of Eve. "Adam was not deceived *but* Eve was . . . *but* [nevertheless] Eve will be. . ." Eve will be saved through *the* childbearing. Thus far in these verses Paul has been taking his illustrative materials from Genesis 2-3. In Genesis 3:15 a message was given to the serpent tht involved a promise for Eve. This text reads (translated literally): "I will set enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, between your posterity and between her posterity. Her posterity will bruise you [the serpent] in reference to the head and you [the serpent with his posterity] will bruise the posterity of the woman in reference to the heel."

The use of the article *the* with "childbearing" is important. Eve knew that in some way a godly posterity (the result of childbearing) would crush the serpent's head

and defeat him. Of course, she did not grasp the full significance of these words. She could not have known then that the godly posterity who would be victorious could only do so by "being in Christ." Paul mentions Eve's salvation here only because he was using her as an illustration of how important learning is for the defeat of moral evil.

Verse 15b. Paul shifts from a singular (she) to a plural subject (they). Women who are a godly posterity of Eve will, like her, be saved if "they remain in faithfulness and love and sanctification with chastity." Paul demands that followers of Christ live a holy life. He specifically pressed these demands on the kind of women whose immodesty, unchastity and exhibition of wealth showed that they had much to learn to make the new life in Christ a vital part of them.

Conclusion

1. Paul as a teacher of Gentiles (I Timothy 2:7) and as one who had lived in Ephesus for three years (Acts 20: 31) knew well his Gentile audience, both men and women.

2. Paul made clear hoe *the* men as a class or group should and should not pray (I Timothy 2:8).

3. Paul knew that *a certain kind of women* who professed godliness were not living a godly life (I Timothy 2: 9-15). Timothy, who first received this letter, was well aware of this. He was to inform women (qualitatively, various kinds) that profession of godliness demanded living a godly life. But the negative prohibitions of indirect command were directed to the kind of women that needed the opening prepositional phrase "that women *in respectable clothing* . . .." Some women needed learning so as to be able to know what a godly life involved and how to live it with God's help.

4. Paul stressed the manner of life in which godly women must abide (I Timothy 2:15b). He demanded a life-long abiding in faith/faithfulness, in love, in holiness or sanctification, and in chastity with good judgement.

5. Four kinds of women are mentioned in this passage:

a. Women who profess and live godliness through good works. These women adorn themselves with modesty and chastity (I Timothy 2: 9-10).

b. Women who had problems with modesty, chastity and the exhibition of wealth (I Timothy 2: 9).

c. The sinless woman Eve whose learning was not sufficient to prevent her deception (I Timothy 2:14-15).

d. Women since Eve who abide in faithfulness, love, holiness and chastity (with good judgement.) The promise to Eve (Genesis3:15) Paul applied to all women of faithfulness and holiness (I Timothy 2:15b).

6. Paul would have been appalled to see how these verses have been misapplied. He was not writing about *all* women as a class or group. Paul knew many women of great Christian maturity. Some of these he called fellow workers—women like Phoebe, Priscilla and other women mentioned in Romans 16. They lived godly lives of ministry and service. One, Priscilla, had been a teacher of Apollos in this very city of Ephesus (Acts 18::26). To suggest that all women of the first century (and today) were guilty of immodesty, unchastity or exhibition of wealth is preposterous. *There is nothing in this passage to support the silencing of godly women, or forbidding their teaching in church, their call to any form of Christian service, or the use of all the gifts the triune God has bestowed upon them* (I Corithians 12, 4:11).

Notes

1. See Philip Barton Payne, "The Interpretation of I Timothy: A Surrejoinder." *Trinity Journal.*, Vol. 2 NS, No. 2 (Fall, 1981), p. 107. "It is difficult to find an English equivalent for *oude*, one which typically joins together two elements in order to convey a single coherent idea, and when referring to two separate ideas joins very closley related pairs. Perhaps the closest equivalent is the English colloquial use of 'n as in 'hit 'n run,' 'nice 'n easy,' 'spic 'n span,' or 'good 'n drunk.' In practically every case 'n joins two words which are thought of together as a single idea. The statement 'Don't eat 'n run!' prohibits leaving the host immediately after eating. It does not prohibit either eating or running by itself . . .."

"We conclude, therefore, that Paul's typical use of *oude* to join together two elements in order to convey a single coherent idea favors an interpretation of I Timothy 2:12 such as 'I am not permitting a woman to teach 'n domineer a man . . .' namely 'to teach in a way that domineers a man . . .'" See also Philip B. Payne, "*Oude* in I Timothy 2:12," paper presented at the Evangelical Theological Society, Annual Meeting, Nov. 21, 1986, p. 5.

2. Payne, "*Oude* in I Timothy 2:12," pp. 2,4,5.

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Letters

From a new member

I am so delighted and *thankful* to find out about CBE! Discovery of this new organization was almost an immediate answer to prayer for me.

I am presently in my middle year at seminary, seeking ordination to the Episcopal priesthood. Just this morning during a break, I prayed with the only other woman in my class for support, encouragement, and Biblical witness. One and a half hours later our New Testament professor came to our women's luncheon and told us about CBE and Catherine Kroeger's [then] upcoming visit to our school! Praise God! I almost fell out of my chair. God's faithfulness, His love is overwhelming. I love Him so.

I will keep CBE in my prayers and will look forward to communications and associations in the future.

God bless you all.

From a North Carolina reader

I read about your organization in the January/February edition of *Daughters of Sarah*. Currently, I am in a dilemma about where I belong. It is difficult to always feel like a square peg in a round hole!

For the past 15 years I have been in the Assemblies of God church and I still believe in the fundamental teachings—*but*, I don't believe in patriarchy as a lifestyle or male dominance as God-given, and therefore my views and opinions have been strongly discouraged.

Please provide any help, materials, and/or contacts for someone like me. Even though I know there are others like me, it is hard to find them in the Bible Belt. Thanks in advance for your help.

Panel Advises Expansion of Women's Roles

Exerpted from an article by Holly Wenzel, The Clarion, March 25, 1988, college newspaper of Bethel College, St. Paul, MN.

In a forum on women's roles in the church, panel members suggested ways women can achieve equality and assume authority inspite of some sexist church structures. The March 18 forum held at Bethel College was co-sponsored by the Minnesota chapter of Christians for Biblical Equality and the Women's Concerns Committee of Bethel College. The panel included Dr. James Beck, clinical psychologist and faculty member at Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary, Rev. Deborah Menken, Assembly of God pastor and Ph.D candidate at Fuller Theological Seminary, Alvera Mickelsen, former journalism instructor at Bethel College, and Dr. Berkeley Mickelsen, professor emeritus at Bethel Seminary. Pyllis Alsdurf, co-author of a book on wife abuse in Christian homes and former editor of *Family Life Today*, moderated the forum.

Beck said that sexism in the church can also disrupt the home and marriage, and said, "We cannot find sexism in Genesis 1 and 2, nor can we find it at the heart of what sexuality was created to be."

Dr. Mickelsen addressed questions about I Timothy 2: 13-15, the passage in which Paul writes that women must be silent in church. [See article above, page 4.]

Mrs. Mickelsen cited scriptural evidence as a whole to show that a male monopoly of authority is wrong. "What our Lord did always was use His authority to empower others. . .. Real authority is used to enable others to become all that God meant them to be, and that is in keeping with the words of our Lord. That message has really been lost, I think, in the church. We have had an attitude that comes from the Army; it doesn't come from the Scriptures."

Menken has had some firsthand experience with sexism. She recalled her parents' and a few church members' encouragement to attend the Assemblies of God Seminary in Springfield, Missouri, but said, "My pastor would not even acknowledge it. He told everybody in the church that I was getting a master's degree in music." When she arrived at the seminary, the academic vice president tried to refuse her entrance. She showed him his hand-signed letter of acceptance and asked if he wasn't going to let her in.

"Well, yes; I have to, but don't you realize an M.Div. is a pastoral degree?"

In her research of women's issues, Alvera Mickelsen said, "I've been really disturbed by the number of women who tell me that somewhere along the way they have been counselled by somebody on some subject, and the line that comes to them is, 'You seem to have trouble with authority.' What it really means is, 'You aren't willing to do what I tell you to do'—that's the problem." Beck said men don't realize the effects of sexism on women ; they have had access to power, to resources, to leadership, and many of them cannot see where the problem is.

The panel was concerned not only about individual women in the church but also about the loss of the church as a whole when it does not recognize a woman's gifts.

Beck hopes to affect the coming generation of church leaders by teaching them awareness of women's issues. "It's like pushing boulders up hills, but if we can affect a few, we may be able to serve more down the road as these people get into positions of leadership."

Menken believes there is more to do than educate. "I think we need people teaching these things, but I think we also need people modelling this ministry as women. I appreciate the opportunity to serve in the classroom as well as behind the pulpit to present a model to women who are evaluating whether or not they might be called."

Mrs. Mickelsen concluded, "Tradition is very difficult to work with, but take the responsibility to do what you can to make women visible, to take your opportunities as they come, and maybe ten years from now it'll be a little better."

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continued from page 2
among Paul's companions. For example, in Philippians 4:2,3 you have a pair mentioned, Euodias and Syntyche, who "have laboured side by side with me in the gospel." Now what does that mean? Certainly it must mean that they were engaged, along with Paul, in pioneer evangelism. That's the normal understanding of that particular Greek idiom. The context makes it very clear what these women were. One of the problems of the Philippian church was that they had tremendous influence; and because they were not presently in agreement on some important issue, the friction between them was causing some very negative things to happen in the life of the church.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit is given, in the teaching of the New Testament, to both men and women without distinction. And fifth, the gifts that the Holy Spirit brings to the church, sent from the risen Lord, are given to men and women without distinction. You can find an example for every gift listed in any of the lists of gifts fulfilled in the life of a women mentioned in the New Testament, with one possible exception - and that's only a possible exception - the gift of an apostle. (But Romans 16:7 mentions a couple who are "well known among the apostles" - and in the Pauline understanding of what an apostle is, this probably ought to be interpreted as meaning that they were well known as apostles—one of them is named Andronicus, the other Junia. The second name could be male or female. If femal—and this is the only form of the name attested outside of the New Testament—it would be an example of a woman apostle in the early church. That is debated, so I will leave it open that there is one possible exception; but there are no others than I am aware of.) There is not a hint that any of the gifts of the Spirit are given to men and not at the same time given to women.

Sixth, men and women have a common call to grow in spiritual maturity and to develop their spiritual gifts. There is no distinction between male and female in this regard either. If a woman has been given a gift to prophesy, or to teach, or to administer, or to do something else, then she has a responsibility from God to use that gift for the glory of God and the service of his people. It is not optional, not something that can be put on a back burner. She has a responsibility under God to do this. If she does not, she is not playing her part as a member of the body of Christ, and the church suffers as a result.

It is frequently suggested nowadays that the husband has the primary spiritual responsibility for his wife. I cannot find any place in the New Testament where this is suggested. As a priest before God, the wife has full access to the presence of God for herself. (The New Testament does not teach "the priesthood of all male believers"!) And as a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ she has the responsibility for her own spiritual growth.

Even the passages used by those who hold the Traditional View contain certain elements that seem to contradict the idea that women in the church and in the home are always to be in submission to men and under the leadership of men. For example, in I Corinthians 11:11-12, Paul stresses the principle of **interdependence** of men and women. Verse 5 makes it clear that women were permitted to pray and prophesy in public worship. Therefore, whatever I Corinthinans 14 means, where Paul says women are not to speak, and I Timothy 2, where Paul says that he doesn't permit a women to teach or to exercise authority over men, you cannot understand these as absolute prohibitions. You must understand these texts in terms of what women actually did in the early church and in terms of other fundamental theological principles.

Again, in Ephesians 5, Paul does not begin his thought with verse 22 (as in most traditional paragraph arrangements and in the traditional interpretation), but rather with verse 21. If you begin the thought there, you come to a different conclusion. Paul says, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." That's the motto or keynote of all that Paul says about men and women in their relationships in the following verses. There is to be a mutual submission as one in Christ, as members of the body of Christ, as under the lordship of Jesus Christ, each in mutual submission to one another. Verses 22 through 24 develop this in relation to the wife. She is to manifest this mutual submission in Christ by being submissive to her husband, in spite of the temptation she might have, because of her new-found freedom in Christ, to lord it over him or to assert her independence.

Verse 25 through 33 work out the same mutual submission in relationship with her husband, who follows the example of Christ, who was not "head" in the sense of "ruler," but in the sense of "servant." The Son of Man came to serve rather than to be served, and so it is with the husband who is the "head" of his wife.

Someone might object, "How do you explain Paul's apparent restrictions on the ministry of women?" Women are not to speak (I Corinthians 14) or to teach (I Timothy 2). My answer is that you understand these in light of the clearer passages of Scripture, which speak about **what women actually did.** In some people's minds, of course, the I Timothy 2 and I Corinthians 14 passages are the clearer passages; and if you begin there, it is hard to get out of your mind that these are not the clearer passages. But if you can psychologically put them aside for awhile and go through all the other New Testament material, it becomes clear that I Corinthians 14:33-34 and I Timothy 2:8-14 are the difficult passages, since they seem to contradict what Paul teaches elsewhere.

How does this solve the problem? Some Bible scholars simply snip these verses out of Paul's letters. Paul must have been consistent, they argue; therefore, he didn't write I Timothy. There is actually a slight textual evidence in favor of the view that Paul didn't write I Corinthians 14:33ff (cf. F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*). Personally, I accept both passages as being Pauline, but I would also argue that Paul did not contradict himself; therefore, one must subordinate what these passages say

to the clearer teaching of what Paul teaches theologically.

Second, one should seek to understand these passages in the context of Paul's dealing with specific problems in the life of the church. In I Corithinans 14: 33-40, Paul is concerned with orderly worship. The principle is that all things are to be done "decently and in order." People were speaking in tongues without interpretation, they were prophesying without waiting for one another, and the church was in disarray administratively. One problem was related—and it is not exactly certain what the problem was—to certain married women interrupting the service by asking questions. It might be that the church was divided like orthodox Jewish synagogues are today (as well as some churches in the Orient) with the men and women sitting on different sides of the room. You can imagine women calling across to their husbands or somehow interrupting the service by asking questions! We cannot be certain that this was the background; the historical evidence is unclear. But whatever the background, Paul was dealing with the question of order; he was not laying down a canon law for the church until the end of time.

In regard to the I Timothy 2 passage, there would be no point in saying women should not teach unless they were doing it. In the context, certain women were clearly teaching heretical things. There was no secular or religious education for women in the ancient world. The synagogue did not permit women to study the Torah. This put women in a very vulnerable situation. In response to this concrete situation Paul suggests that women should not teach in the church.

Does this mean that this passage is a law for all times, that it is intended to separate between men and women in the exercise of their spiritual gifts in the church? Not at all. Paul is addressing a specific problem. Today, women have, in the general society, in the church, and in theological institutions, the same opportunities to study and to develop their teaching gifts as men. Does Paul's limitation of the role of women in the church at Ephesus apply to this changed situation? I think not.

Let me conlcude by listing a few hermeneutical principles, which I think lead to an egalitarian point of view regarding the role of women today and which help to sort out some of the attendant problems.

First, there is the well-known **contextual principle**, namely that a text must be treated within its immediate context, within its full unit of meaning. We must be aware of the danger of "proof-texting," of taking portions of Scripture outside their literary and theological context and using them to support ideas that are quite far from their original meaning. I have already illustrated this in the interpretaion of Ephesians 5:22ff. One must begin with verse 21; and if you understand verse 21 as laying down the fundamental theological principle, you come to see the passage as teaching mutual submission of husband and wife, rather than the subordination of women to men.

The same principle is helpful in understanding the reference to women "keeping silent" in I Corinthians 14. You must begin with the beginning, verse 40, which says that all things must be done decently and in order. Again, you realize that Paul is concerned about church order, not about church law.

Second, there is the **linguistic principle**. One must look at the original Greek or Hebrew lying behind a particular text. Here one must recognize that there is a sexist bias in modern and ancient translations of the Bible. The fact is, nearly all translations of the Bible thus far—all the ones most of us are familiar with—have been done exclusively by males, who, unfortunately, are often insensitive to women. Why should Phoebe be called a "servant" and "succourer," rather than a "deacon" and a "guardian" (Romans 16)? There is no grammatical reason, only theological prejudice. Why in I Timothy 3:1 should one translate the passage "If any **man** desires the office of a bishop", rather than "any **one**"? I will admit that most elders and bishops in the early church were males, and that Paul seems in this passage to assume that the people being talked about were males. But the fact of the matter is, you do not **have** to translate it that way. A simple pronoun is used, and "any one" is a good English translation.

The third principle is the well-known **historical principle**. One must take the historical, as well as the literary, context into consideration. This means that you must understand what the New Testament teaches in the light of the position of women in first century Judaism. Ecclesiasticus 42:13-14 says, "Better is the wickedness of a man than the woman who does good, and it is a woman who brings shame and disgrace." That represented a fairly typical male Gentile view as well. Jewish males don't have a monopoly of prejudice against women!

When our daughter was about six months old, an elderly Christian man looked at her on one occasion and asked, "Boy or girl?" Answer: "Girl." "More sin and evil in the world," he replied. My wife smiled and replied, "No, more sweetness and joy!" It became very obvious as we spent some time with this man and his wife that they both really believed this. And I'm afraid there are many people who, psychologically if not actually, would affirm this, who actually live this way.

Then there is the synagogue prayer, which remains today in the Jewish prayer book, and which existed at least as early as the second century A.D. "I thank thee, Lord, that thou hast not made me a Gentile. . . thou hast not made me a slave. . . thou hast not made me a woman." You have to understand Galatians 3:28 as Paul's, or, shall we say, the early church's, response to this fundamental idea. Galatians 3:28 may actually be an early baptismal formula that Paul is simply quoting. But it is a response to this particular idea: the church is setting itself over against the synagogue and affirming the unity of humankind in Jesus Christ.

Another example is the word *kephale* , which is trans-

lated "head" in I Corinthains 11:3 and Ephesians 5:23. There is no historical evidence that *kephale* was ever used anywhere in Greek literature in the modern sense of "decision-making." Thus, the idea that the husband as "head" should be the decision-making person in the marriage relationship is quite anachronistic. The ancients did not think in terms of making decisions in the "head"; decisions are made "in the heart," both in the Hebrew Old Testament and the New Testament, as well as in secular Greek.

Again, the prohibition regarding women's teaching in I Timothy 2:8-15 must be interpreted within the context of Judaism, where there was no possibility for a woman to give or receive formal religious instruction; and in the context of the early church, where the women were teaching, though these women at Ephesus were teaching false doctrine. The scandal of the early church was that it was much freer than the general society in regard to the relationships between the sexes. Because of this, it was constantly being accused of being too loose in its morality. Therefore, Paul says, on certain occasions, "Let the law of love take precedence over the law of liberty." This is a principle Paul applies to other circumstances (e.g., to the question of foods to be eaten), and here he applies it to the role of women.

Fourth, **one should seek to interpret a particular text within the context of an author's writing as a whole.** You read the difficult in the light of the clear, rather than vice versa. As F. F. Bruce points out in his new commentary on Galatians, Galatians 3:28 must be the theological starting place. Here you have an unequivocal statement, a theological statement if there ever was one, of absolute equality in Christ in the church. And, by definition, this means a denial of discrimination either for Gentiles, slaves or women. Everything else that Paul writes must be understood in the light of this clear statement of a fundamental Christian principle.

Fifth, there is the principle of **the analogy of faith.** One assumes the consistency of Scripture as a whole. You must not interpret a particular text in a manner that contradicts a major tenet of God's word. Certainly at the heart of Jesus' teaching and example is the principle that those who are leaders ought to be servants (Mark 10:35-45, etc.). This is the model Jesus taught. Whatever conception you might have of a husband being the head of his wife, as such he must be a servant-leader.

Again, consider what the Bible teaches about creation and redemption. You must understand its teaching about the role of women as fitting into that. To undercut the clear teaching of Scripture concerning the sharing of the divine image and the rule over creation by man as male and female by the use of a few ambiguous texts is certainly a travesty of God's word! Or the doctrine of God: God in orthodox Christian theology is not male or female. We find ourselves in the awkward situation of having to choose between male and female pronouns, but there is no hint in the Bible anwhere that God is regarded as either a male or a female. There are feminine as well as masculine images used of God in the Bible, and others that are not tied to the idea of sex at all.

Sixth, one is informed by **the history of biblical interpretation,** which may shed light on a passage at hand. People who take the traditional view need to be aware of the fact that up until the middle of the nineteenth century most Christians believed that slavery was a divine institution because Paul says very emphatically that slaves are to obey their masters! A few verses from Paul and Peter (Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-24; 1 Pet 1:18-25) were used as proof-texts to oppose a small band of forward looking Christians and others of their day who felt that the whole idea of slavery as an institution was an affront to the dignity and worth of man as made in the image of God. Furthermore, the very texts we have been looking at have been used in the past to argue that women should not be formally educated. That battle has been won, and it is good to know that it was an evangelical college in North America, Oberlin College, a century and a quarter ago, that was the first academic institution ever to accept women to study at the university level. Nearly all Christians today rejoice in the fact that women now are affirmed in professions, in secular leadership, in government, even as heads of government; that women have the vote; that women are welcomed into the work force. Few, if any, traditionalists argue that we should stop educating women, encouraging them to be lawyers and doctors and teachers, or being allowed to vote. I think we should learn from this.

The most difficult thing about the Egalitarian View is that it is the minority view historically, and perhaps even today. We must remember, however, that some 150 years ago, believing that slavery was an evil, and that black Africans were "men made in the image of God" just like white Europeans, was the minority view in the church. But that view was the correct view. This we all recognize today.

It is possible that 150 years from now it will be equally obvious that the denial of full equality of women in the body of Christ was just as wrong? I hope so, with all my heart.

W. Ward Gasque is Vice Principal and Professor of New Testament at Regent College.

CBE News

National Board Meeting

The annual meeting of the National Board of Christians for Biblical Equality convened March 19, 1988. Those present were James Alsdurf, James Beck, Ruth Hall, Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, Catherine Clark Kroeger, Deborah Olsoe Lunde, Faith Martin, Susan McCoubrie,

Alvera Mickelsen, Berkeley Mickelsen, Ruth Mickelsen and Nancy Graf Peters. The board elected various officers, and we are now served by Alvera Mickelsen as Chairman of the Board, Catherine Kroeger as President, Ruth Hall as Treasurer and Susan McCoubrie as Secretary.

Attorney Ruth Mickelsen advised the board that CBE is now incorporated as a non-profit organization and tax-exempt status is pending. Contributions made currently will be tax-exempt.

Issues regarding local chapters were also discussed, and a committee appointed to address them. Plans were formulated for book and tape lists, a mail order service, and the CBE National Conference in 1989.

"SERVING TOGETHER" To Be Conference Theme

Christians for BIblical Equality is planning its first national conference for July 20-23, 1989 on the Bethel College campus in St. Paul, Minnesota. Plenary speakers will be Kari Malcolm, author of *Women at the Crossroads* and *Building your Family to Last*, and Elaine Storkey, a colleague of John Stott at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity. Elaine is the author of the book, *What's Right with Feminism*, and president of Men, Women, and God, International.

Other leaders will include Gretchen Gaebelein Hull, author of *Equal to Serve*, and Faith Martin, who wrote *Call Me Blessed*. There will be workshops given by Alvera and Berkeley Mickelsen, Jim and Ginny Beck, Phyllis and Jim Alsdurf, Deborah Menken, and Dick and Cathie Kroeger. Also, a special children's program is being planned by Nancy Graf Peters. Best of all, meet with others who share your concerns, needs, and outlook.

New Chapters

We are pleased to welcome the Front Range (Colorado) and Pittsburgh chapters to CBE! Also newly formed is the Sydney, Australia chapter of Men, Women and God, International.

Contributions, please!

Yes, we do need your money; and our lawyer tells us that we may now ask for contributions. We are far enough along in the process of application for tax exempt status so that your gifts will be tax-deductible barring an unforeseen and unlikely complication with IRS.

What will your money do for CBE? The organization's purpose is to affirm the biblical basis for the equality and ministry of women and men; but we must achieve our end in very pragmatic ways that entail a price tag. Our largest cost is for printing - a way of sharing the good news of God's redeeming and enabling love for all. We are also getting appeals for printed materials from overseas, and we are doing our best to respond. Another expense is postage - part of getting the Word into people's homes. Your gifts are needed to maintain an office and to pay minimal salaries to our hard-working secretary and treasurer.

We are also in need of seed money for our national conference, scheduled for July 20-23, 1989. We are trying to plan an economical conference - but one that will challenge, instruct, inspire, support and nourish. Your gifts and prayers can make it happen.

Study Day on Cape Cod

Thursday, August 4, has been designated for a Study Day on Cape Cod. The subject will be the difficult passages in Paul about women. Leaders will include Mardi Keyes of L'Abri and Dick and Cathie Kroeger. Aida Besacon Spenser will try to be on hand for the afternoon.

The discussions will start at 10:00 a.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. An informal supper will follow for those who want to talk and visit further. For lunch reservations, information about accommodations, and directions contact Catherine Kroeger, 1073 Stony Brook Road, Brewster, MA, 02631, (617-896-3443).

Reprints Available

A major part of our ministry is putting relevant material in the hands of our readers. The charge for these reprints is nominal, covering only printing, postage and handling, and we request that you send in a small donation in addition to the stated price for each reprint so that we might continue this ministry.

1. "The 'Head' of the Epistles" by Berkely and Alvera Mickelsen. Has the misunderstanding of the meaning of 'head' robbed us of the richer, more exalted picture of Christ that Paul was trying to give us? 4 pgs. $.74, plus donation.
2. "Does Male Dominance Tarnish our Translations?" by Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen. The Bible is uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit, but the translators are not. 5pgs. $.79, plus donation.
3. "Does Order of Creation, Redemption, and Climax Demand Female Supremacy?" by Alvera Mickelsen. A satire that jolts the reader into taking a fresh look at the new order Christ came to establish. 3pgs. $.69, plus donation.
4. "Shaky Foundations : The Three-Layered Wedding Cake" by Kari Torjesen Malcolm. A candid look at the 'footings' of our marriages by the author of *Women at the Crossroads* and *Building Your Family to Last*. 4 pgs. $.74, plus donation.
5. "The Ministry of Women" by A.J. Gordon. A classic defense of Biblical feminism written in 1888 by the founder of Gordon College. 5 pgs. $.79, plus donation.
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10. "GOD, Father and Mother" by Leonard Swidler. Speaking of God soley in male terms is an act of injustice, or at least misunderstanding. 3 pgs. $.69, plus donation.
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17. "May Women Teach? Heresy in the Pastoral Epistles" by Richard and Catherine Kroeger. Was the struggle against heresy a main reason for Paul's strong statements concerning women in the Pastoral Epistles? 4 pgs. $.74, plus donation.
18. "Sexual Identity in Corinth: Paul Faces a Crisis" by Richard and Catherine Kroeger. The complexities of I Cor. 11 become less tangled when understood against the background of 1st century Greek society. Also on this reprint, "An Evangelical Impasse: Women in the Church and Home" by Robert K. Johnston. We must clear away the accretions of the past and resist accomodation to the present if Scripture is to operate normatively concerning a theology of women in church and home. 8 pgs. $.94, plus donation.

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